Matike Mai Constitutional Convention Leading National Discussion For Change

Friday, 5 February 2021, 11:29 am
Press Release: National Iwi Chairs
https://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PO2102/S00047/matike-mai-constitutional-convention-leading-national-discussion-for-change.htm

Dr Moana Jackson's keynote for Matike Mai Constitutional Convention, 3rd February 2021 stated that "*this was a hui that is part of a long history of constitutionalism and for Māori living in a colonised state to continue to reclaim mana motuhake and rangatiratanga.*"

Dr Jackson, (Ngati Kahungunu, Ngati Porou) a constitutional expert, acknowledged the convention as a mark in history and that, "*as Māori we struggle in the reality of not being able to make our own decisions. In reclaiming Te Tiriti o Waitangi and giving effect to our tipuna who signed Te Tiriti, we continue to focus on the right to self determination and strengthening the ability for us to live as whānau and hapu*".

This convention builds on recommendations from *Report of Matike Mai Aotearoa – the Independent Working Group on Constitutional Transformation* 2016. The terms of reference given to Matike Mai Aotearoa were:

To develop and implement a model for an inclusive Constitution for Aotearoa based on tikanga and kawa, He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Niu

Tireni of 1835, Te Tiriti o Waitangi of 1840, and other indigenous human rights instruments which enjoy a wide degree of international recognition.

Originally scheduled to take place in Waitangi, due to community covid-19 concerns, the convention was moved online and had more than 120 participants from across the country.

Professor Margaret Mutu (Ngati Kahu) noted that our current constitutional arrangements have prevented us as a nation from addressing injustices, inequities, denial of rights, land confiscations and racism resulting from Doctrine of Discovery and colonisation in Aotearoa. Professor Mutu said, *"Constitutional transformation requires to reinstate the balance between mana Māori motuhake (Māori 'sovereignty') and British kāwanatanga agreed to in the signing of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in 1840."*

Dr Claire Charters restated the importance of He Puapua, the National Plan of Action on the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples, to help us realise constitutional transformation. He Puapua has just been released under the Official Information Act, after being submitted to Ministers in November 2019.

Janell Dymus-Kurei (Whakatohea) presented on rangatahi and rangatira activities implementing Matike Mai since 2016 and concluded with whakaaro from Mereana Pitman (Ngati Kahungunu), *"My greatest aspiration is that my mokopuna will laugh at how feeble my dreams were."*

National Iwi Chairs have been leading a project Aotearoa 2020 Vision to help us as a nation create the vision that will underpin our constitutional future. Te Huia Bill Hamilton (Ngati Kahungunu, Nga Rauru, Ngati Raukawa) assured participants that, "*We will continue to work together, with communities,*

organisations and the government over 2021 and into the future to realise the visions of our tipuna.”

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